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## Sport History

### ***Beach Volleyball***

#### **Origins and the sport today:**

Volleyball was invented in 1895 as an alternative to basketball, and beach volleyball was believed to have first been played in Hawaii about 20 years later.

The Federation Internationale de Volleyball/International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) was founded in France in April 1947. Famous figures, such as The Beatles, Marilyn Monroe and John F Kennedy, helped bring attention to the sport in America when they attended beach volleyball events at Santa Monica's Sorrento Beach in California in the 1960s, with the sport becoming popular in Europe soon after.

A key step forward was the formation of the California Beach Volleyball Association (CBVA) in 1965.

The first organised beach volleyball championships were held in 1976 - the sport was recognised as an official discipline of volleyball in 1986.

Despite financial struggles, beach volleyball is thriving, helped greatly by its admission to the Olympic Games at Atlanta 1996 – with 24 men's teams and 16 women's teams. The sport has been dominated by the USA and Brazil in major competition, although there are African, Asian, European and North American confederations.

#### **Beach volleyball at the Commonwealth Games:**

Beach volleyball is an optional sport at the Commonwealth Games, meaning it is up to the host federation to decide whether it should be on the program.

Beach volleyball will be making its Commonwealth Games debut at Gold Coast 2018 and feature men's and women's events - Coolangatta Beachfront will host the action.

#### **Beach volleyball in Australia:**

In terms of Olympic competition, Australia made a big impact at the first appearance of the sport, winning a bronze medal at the Atlanta 1996 Games, thanks to Kerri POTTHARST and Natalie COOK in the women's tournament. They went even better at Sydney 2000, bringing home the gold.

COOK is one of the most famous names in the sport, being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia alongside POTTHARST following the Sydney 2000 victory.

After POTTHARST retired, COOK linked up with Nicole SANDERSON and won a bronze medal at the 2003 World Championships in Rio de Janeiro. Cook was the first Australian woman to compete at five Olympic Games and represented Australia in the first five of the six Olympic women's beach volleyball tournaments that have been held.

Taliqua CLANCY was the first Indigenous Australian volleyballer to represent the country at the Olympics – she has the Aboriginal flag tattooed on her wrist. She competed alongside Louise BAWDEN in the women's competition at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, with the pair losing at the quarterfinal stage.

In the men's event, Julien PROSSER represented Australia in three consecutive Olympic Games, finishing ninth at Atlanta 1996, ninth at Sydney 2000, and just missing out on a medal at Athens 2004, with fourth. Joshua SLACK is another three-time Olympian, who has won more than 10 Australian Beach Volleyball (ABV) events and Australian Championship titles.